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DRAMA

A MONTHLY RECORD OF THE THEATRE
IN TOWN AND COUNTRY
AT HOME & ABROAD



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6d.

Published by
THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE
8 ADELPHI TERRACE
LONDON
W.C.

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VOL. V

NOVEMBER MCMXXVI

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THE JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

OCTOBER PLAYS

By Ivor Brown

A SUCCESSFUL autumn in the theatres may mean a dull October. If the September productions are flourishing, there will be no need and no room for substitutes. The popularity of plays like "The Constant Nymph" and "Escape" is a good sign of the times; it has also kept the critic away from houses whither one usually turns for something intelligent. October has been a quiet month, with revivalism to give it distinction. Mr. Philip Ridgway has given us his last production at Barnes, and also his best. A second glimpse of "The Three Sisters" was an obvious delight for those who had seen it before; an obvious chance for those who missed it. So ends the phase in which Mr. Ridgway and Mr. Komisarjevsky have made us Barnes-stormers all. Mr. Chesterton's song about the day we went to Birmingham by way of Beachy Head might have a parallel about the nights we went to Russia by way of Hammersmith. Chekhov's Russia may have vanished eternally, but it lives wherever there is autumn in the hearts of men. Of Chekhov's delicate negatives, to use a metaphor of Mr. Ashley Dukes, Mr. Komisarjevsky has been an exquisite developer. In "The Three Sisters" his hand was most sure, his company most inspired.

At the Kingsway Sir Barry Jackson gave us Rosmersholm. Englished in a modern idiom, and tailored up to the nations of 1926, can we be persuaded that Rosmer is an English country gentleman? I think not, nor does it matter. What does matter is Miss Edith Evans's performance as Rebecca West. There can be no hesitant opinions about this powerful creation. I have heard it strongly attacked as ruinously

self-conscious acting, in which the player's brain was too visibly at work, driving the expression of emotion, and the player's voice was too deliberately schooled for the naturalistic setting. I do not agree. Miss Evans is Miss Evans. She has mannerisms and in that she is no different from other mighty ones. "All good things come from the heart." "Yes," said John Morley. "But they should go round by the head." The acting of Miss Evans is perfectly summarized by Morley's aphorism. It goes round by the brain. But to argue that where there is a feast of reason there can be no flow of soul is nonsense. For its expression of pain I shall always remember this Rebecca's strained and tortured mask. It was a triumph of mood as well of mind, and it is good to know, for the credit of our time, that Ibsen, even with this dark and ghosted play, is able to command a run.

Among the pieces of the month is "Berkeley Square," which Mr. Balderston, with Mr. Squire's help, built up round an idea of Henry James's. If you care for the fantasy of a man wandering from one century to another, you will like it. The cast is beyond reproach. Miss Jean Forbes-Robertson has a part any actress might sigh for, and takes her chance; Mr. Laurence Anderson confirms opinion of his capacity, and Miss Beatrice Wilson presents a model of style in eighteenth century work.

At the Everyman, Mr. Noel Coward's "The Rat-trap" was rescued from the bookshelf. It might have stayed there. It is a cradle-piece of the terrible infant, promising that dramatist's adroitness rather than displaying it.

CONCERNING PRODUCTION

II. PRESENTATION.

IN direct opposition to presentation is representation : the theatre conceived as an illusory world existing apart from the audience, of whose presence it is in theory unaware. Presentation seeks to approach the spectator, who is looked upon as assisting at the performance ; representation ignores him, and in the effort to create the illusion of reality has withdrawn the performance completely within the proscenium, which is regarded as an impassable barrier between stage and auditorium.

Idealistically, representation is fidelity to truth.

This is not the place to enquire into the rise of the representational concept in drama, nor its expression and influence on the stage, but (since farce and old-fashioned melodrama retains a sort of debased presentationalism) it was probably a development through the comedy of manners which inevitably concerned itself with externals, and so becoming more and more objective and pseudo-naturalistic, could no longer be conceived along other than imitative lines. I have shown that the picture-frame stage (as it has been called) and the use of painted scenery did not necessarily mean a stagecraft other than presentational, but the localization of scenes naturally meant, sooner or later, the representation of all that is implied by locality. From a painted view of a street or garden to a detailed, elaborately propertied representation of such, was but a series of steps, and although these steps were taken very gradually, presentation waned, public taste declining with it, while its opposite, which conceives the unfolding of the dramatic fable as necessarily within and dependent upon locality (and all that that implies) waxed strong, to the extinction of poetic and the degradation of the classic drama.

The desuetude of the principle of

presentation and the misuse of the principle of representation, with the craving for spectacle, eventually gave us on the one hand such horrors as the Shakespearean productions at His Majesty's Theatre, and on the other a clumsy, poor, would-be deceptive mounting which could not be dignified by the name stagecraft, a thing of canvas doors in walls without thickness, borders (strips of painted canvas hung horizontally across the stage) to "represent" sky and ceiling, hanging cloths and profiled wings making pseudo-realistic stage pictures to "represent" landscapes, gardens, and so on. Now, although much of all this remains to hamper us, since, mainly for economic reasons, the mechanical side of the theatre in England makes virtually no progress whatever, there has been a marked improvement, and this is due not to the stage-decorators, but to a new dramatic species which had its birth late in the nineteenth century, and has been variously called the theatre of ideas and the drama of social criticism. It might more exactly be called the drama of social observation, since it does not always criticize and is too often lacking in ideas; but as the purpose of this paper is not dramatic criticism of which we have too much, but theatric examination, of which we have not enough, let it suffice to point out that this social drama was and is strongly tinged with conscious didacticism. It therefore seized upon all means to further its ends, and in doing so inevitably hastened the development of the representational stage towards realism, for, as the dramatist sought truth by the representation of actuality, so the stage was bound to further the illusion of actuality by increased fidelity to the truth of the outward appurtenances and details of the particular dramatic subject. The new drama required new stage-direction : the study of

CONCERNING PRODUCTION

psychology, philosophy, social conditions and problems, demanded a functionary who should direct the stage in accordance with the naturalism and fidelity to truth now become necessary, one unhampered by the administrative and routine duties of stage-management. This director of the stage, intellectually and aesthetically responsible for the performance, has come to be known as the producer. Further, the social drama by its literalism, required of the actor a fidelity of representation which, to the detriment of histrionic art, brought about the fashion of casting on type.

Logically, the representational or picture-frame stage must be regarded (when an interior is to be represented) as a room, one wall of which is transparent. If the scene be out of doors, we must look upon a framed exterior view peculiarly restricted in space, and fidelity to truth demands that not only shall the setting, furniture, decoration, dress, reproduce with absolute correctness whatever they represent, but the actors, rather than play their parts, must be the persons of the play; their speech, their positions on the stage, and their movements from one position to another, must be as if the scene were observed in real life and not played on the stage. This is the Fourth Wall School. Now, however drastically this idea is carried out, however hard we try to be what is called natural, the fact remains that the theatre is artificial, it cannot copy nature; whatever is to be done must be done by means of art. We are forced to select, eliminate and synthesise, to resort to artifice. In the presentational period they played in broad daylight, and carried torches or lighted candles to suggest night; to-day the auditorium is darkened, and we switch on the electric light to simulate day. We are compelled to resort to artifice and concede to theatricality, which is another name for presentation. The Fourth Wall school, which seeks to carry the Repre-

sentational Concept to its logical conclusions, frequently beclouds if it does not defeat, the very object of the theatre, which is, surely, to get the play as a whole, an *ensemble*, not into the minds of the people "in front," but, a very different matter, into the collective mind of the audience. Fidelity to truth is one thing, disregard of convention another, and the finest representation will satisfy the desire of illusion while retaining the basic principle of presentation.

It is curious that the playwright seldom has appreciable influence on theoretic forms; he generally pours the (more or less) new wine of his invention into the old bottles which he finds to hand. So the costume-play, whatever its kind, is as realistic, and the poetic drama as representational in *concept* as are the contemporary social play and comedy of manners. Well, since the aim of representation is to create illusion through fidelity to truth, it follows that each departure from truth is disillusionary, and is misrepresentation. Costume-plays, if not in the region of fantasy, like "Prunella," demand truth to period, and it is difficult to see what is gained by discarding it. Archaeology may, indeed, seem to be peculiarly repugnant to the theatrical mind, but Florentine interiors of the time of Lorenzo the Magnificent did not look like Heal's model flat, and the Florentines of that day were not clad in nondescript fancy dress, as in a London production of "La Cena delle Beffe" not long ago. There is something spiritually ugly about such untruthfulness. If our period-play is of the representational concept, then fidelity to truth in its every aspect is the only key to right production, and representation in the theatre should be welcome if only because it imposes the delightful task of research and reproduction in order "to hold as t'wer the Mirrour up to Nature; to show . . . the verie Age and Bodie of the Time,

CONCERNING PRODUCTION

his forme and pressure."

Much could be written on the place of stage-decoration in dramatic production, but the matter must be left with the passing comment that fidelity to concept is the only intellectually honest way for the stage-designer, as well as the stage-director. Fidelity to what concept? To the author's, of course, and to the theoretic concept of his time.

Train the eyes, train the hearing. Is it not Goethe who advises us to read daily some good verse and some good prose, to hear good music and daily to look upon good painting and sculpture? This might have been thought of for the especial benefit of would-be producers, for surely nothing trains and sensitizes those intuitive faculties, which are the chief reliance of the real producer (or stage-director) so much as aesthetic contemplation, living daily in nearness

to works of art. Endeavour, too, to be "a great observer"; watch men, and especially watch women, and listen with concentrated hearing and curiosity to the tones and inflections of their voices. The student is advised to make a special study of stage-directions. Take, say, two dozen modern plays and read carefully, with a view to getting at the concept, the authors' descriptions and stage-directions. They are peculiarly useful in deciding the all-important question: is it fantasy, is it realistic, romantic, or what is it, in concept? When reading plays try to visualize what is happening, but beware of straining to visualize; do not try to force yourself to see, but read and re-read and ponder it until the play begins strangely, unmistakably to form itself in the mind's eye, and bear in mind always the basic principle of presentation.

A. E. FILMER

"OFFICIAL RULE"

"The L.C.C. has now got safety on the brain, and its officers will hardly permit a manager to improve a seat in the gallery without first tearing down and reconstructing the theatre."—Mr. St. John Ervine in the Observer.

WHAT behind these words to all who have tried to obtain a footing for the Community Theatre in London! What a tale could I unfold of a life and death struggle with L.C.C. officials! But discretion is better. I will only announce the result. The St. Pancras People's Theatre has obtained an annual stage play licence! The miserable hand-to-mouth existence on an occasional licence is over, and community players trying to get their own theatre should again take heart.

While all Londoners appreciate the quite magnificent work of the London Fire Brigade, and while the desire is universal for every reasonable precaution against fire, it is surely vital to the artistic life of London that the policy in these matters should not be entirely that of the official, whose one consideration is the avoidance

of danger from fire. To him the surest way to accomplish this is by the prevention of any assembling of persons. It is wiser to say no more. I will close with but one hint. It is far easier for a body like the L.C.C. to crush a plan submitted on paper than to put down activity already in being and commanding popularity.

Begin with the occasional play, and get it well established in the place where you hope for a theatre before it attracts the official eye. When the latter happens, state without flinching that you intend to fight to the death for your theatre, and to use every method of publicity in your power, if private negotiations fail. In this way you will have to meet only such demands as will appear reasonable if set out in a newspaper letter, or in a question in Parliament, and to these all good citizens are naturally prepared to submit.

Already London has lost to Cambridge a community theatre it can ill afford to lose. Unless the official attitude can be overcome, London must inevitably fall behind all other cities in community theatre work.

EDITH NEVILLE



STAGE SETTING FOR "BERKELEY SQUARE"
AT THE ST. MARTIN'S THEATRE. FROM
THE ORIGINAL DESIGN BY GEORGE W.
HARRIS.



EDWARD GORDON CRAIG, REPRODUCED
BY PERMISSION FROM "TWENTY-FOUR
PORTRAITS, SECOND SERIES," BY WIL-
LIAM ROTHENSTIEIN, PUBLISHED BY
MESSRS. CHATTO AND WINDUS.

GLIMPSE AT MR. CRAIG

By John Rothenstein

A GREEN - SHUTTERED window opened somewhere above, from which a voice cried, "Come up!"

I went up into a room in which was seated one of the most significant figures of our time. Mr. Gordon Craig has not only the mind, but the presence of a man of genius. He seems to vibrate with the ideas and enthusiasm which have revolutionized the modern stage. The orientation of the contemporary theatre away from the old-fashioned rigid realism towards a more abstract and formal presentation has been primarily due to his influence. Nor has he only concerned himself with great issues. He has pointed the way towards reform in almost every department of theatrical production. And as befits a son of Ellen Terry, Mr. Craig is an accomplished actor.

Everyone knows that he is a malcontent. I therefore asked him what he conceived to be the first step needed to reform the English theatre. "There is no first step," he replied. "But two or three theatres should be run by really gifted men." "Reform," he continued, "must come rather through individual enthusiasm and ability than by administrative innovations such as, for example, the foundation of a national theatre."

For half an hour he talked in this sense, in brief, brilliant exclamatory sentences. I sat spellbound, wondering how it was that so many other and hostile influences could hold their own against Mr. Craig's in the theatre of to-day. Perhaps the reason is contained in an admission he once made. He wrote of a scene he had designed, "Quite an impossible scene; that is to say, impossible to realize on a stage. But I wanted to know for once what it felt like to be mounting up impossible ladders and beckoning people to come

up after me." This mounting of impossible heights and beckoning to the all but immovable populace to follow has ever been the favourite sport of prophets; indeed, the impulse to do so constitutes the very essence of the prophetic nature. But if Mr. Craig has often been mastered by this impulse, he has not only beckoned but pulled the modern theatre up many ladders of magnificent achievement.



On the following day, while I was reflecting in a neighbouring villa upon my latest meeting with Mr. Craig in his little book-lined room overlooking the Mediterranean, a message arrived from him expressing a wish to see me again. I went once more to his villa. He received me on the terrace. "I have sent for you," he said, "to answer the question you put to me yesterday. You asked me what I would suggest as the first reform necessary to improve the English theatre. But I must beg you to take what I am going to say with the utmost seriousness. The English theatre is dead-alive. There is little enthusiasm among the actors; the audience spend their time largely in the examination of one another. The whole thing is so slow. As a first step towards changing this sad state of affairs I would have "Rule Britannia" played differently. In the parks, in the streets, bands should take that pretty fine tune at a quicker tempo—incisively—with the same attack that we hear used by military bands here. Speed up that tune, and all England might unconsciously speed up, too, and its pulse beat a little faster. This would affect the theatre—and all else.

"I can see you don't believe me. But I mean it!"

BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE NOTES



THE JOURNAL OF THE BRITISH DRAMA LEAGUE

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Telephone: GERRARD 8011.

Neither the Editor nor the Drama League as a whole accepts any responsibility for the opinions expressed in signed articles printed in this Journal.

WE make no apology for withholding this month several of our usual features in favour of a full report of the meetings held in London at the end of October in connexion with the Annual Conference of the British Drama League. The experiment of holding the Conference in London was completely justified. A record number of affiliated societies were represented at the Conference itself, while the Lord Mayor's hospitality at the Mansion House was an event of which the League may well be proud. On the same evening, after a somewhat hasty dinner at the Florence Restaurant, over a hundred delegates and members of the League visited "The Constant Nymph" at the New Theatre. The play was much enjoyed, and formed the subject of discussion at an informal meeting held in the Library at 8 Adelphi Terrace on the Saturday evening.

By the time this number of DRAMA is published, competitions throughout the six "National Festival" areas will be in full swing. We are glad to be able to announce that Mr. W. A. Darlington, on behalf of the *Daily Telegraph*, has consented to act as judge in the Area Finals. Mr. Darlington will visit Birmingham on November 27, Glasgow on December 9, Manchester on December 11, and Leeds on December 18. The London Area Festival will be held at the theatre of the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art on December 17. The date of the Bath Festival is not yet fixed. The Final Festival will be held in London some time in February. Two other judges will be nominated to collaborate with Mr. Darlington in making the final awards on that occasion, which it is hoped will worthily display to the public the aims and achievement of the community theatre movement.



M. Gémier will visit London during the week beginning Monday, November 22. He will find the English Committee of the Universal Society of the Theatre firmly established on the basis of representation from most of the important organization which touch the professional side of theatre art. On Thursday evening, October 25, M. Gémier will deliver an address on "Le Théâtre et la Paix" at the French Institute, Cromwell Place, South Kensington. This lecture will be given under the joint auspices of the Institut Français and the British Drama League. Tickets may be obtained free on application to the Hon. Secretary of the Drama League.



The Fifteenth Annual Conference of Educational Associations will be held at University College, Gower Street, London, from Thursday, December 30 to Friday, January 7. On the opening day of the Conference, December 30, at 5 p.m., the Drama League holds a meeting on "The Festival Spirit in Drama." Sir Barry Jackson and others will speak.



We congratulate Mr. E. J. Dent on his appointment to the Professorship of Music at Cambridge University.

DRAMA LEAGUE CONFERENCE

RECEPTION AT THE MANSION HOUSE

FIRST among stage institutions to be welcomed officially to the Mansion House, the British Drama League inaugurated its annual conference in London on Friday afternoon, October 29, with a distinguished party, convened by the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress. Several hundred guests, many of whom were attending the conference from outlying parts of the country, assembled in the historic Mansion House, where the Lord Mayor (Alderman Sir William Pryke), with Miss Pryke, and Viscount Burnham (vice-president of the league), received them.

Lord Howard de Walden, president of the British Drama League, was absent from London. Among others who regretted inability to be present were Sir John Martin Harvey, Sir Barry V. Jackson, and Dame Ellen Terry.

After tea, which was served in the Egyptian Hall, the Lord Mayor expressed a welcome to his guests. Their visit, he said, apparently created a precedent, for the annals of the Mansion House contained no record of a similar gathering in connexion with any established theatrical institution. He understood that the British Drama League had something like 900 branches scattered far and wide over the country, representing thousands of play lovers and play actors, united in the common purpose of promoting the best interests of the stage. He extended to them his best wishes for the success of their deliberations during the conference. In welcoming them to the Mansion House he expressed his pleasure at the opportunity they had given him of striking out in a new branch of work for that ancient institution.

Viscount Burnham said: "My Lord Mayor, my Lady Mayoress, Ladies and Gentlemen: The British Drama League is intensely grateful to you, my Lord Mayor, for the gracious and spacious hospitality you are according us this afternoon. It may be that we are assisting at an epoch-making event in the history of the Mansion House. You have told us that this reception here of a dramatic society constitutes, in itself, a record. I hope and believe that it is not merely a passing phase, but that the

British drama will, in future, recognize that in the Mansion House it has one of its established centres. It may be true that to-day there is no playhouse within the precincts of the City. On the other hand, the City of London takes the whole world as its province, and many times, I think, the City has recognized the vital importance of the drama in our national life. Apart from that, the City is by no means strange to the artistic side of life, for I do not believe that anywhere in the world is the art of ceremony better presented than it is in the City of London."

Lord Burnham went on to say that the British Drama League existed for the popular organization of the drama throughout this country. It was not for him to go through the annual report that was presented in June last. He would only note the fact that they were all looking forward to the National Festival of Community Drama which had already obtained the entry of no less than 125 dramatic societies. That showed the point of effective popularity that the work of the League had already reached.

"In conclusion, ladies and gentlemen," said Lord Burnham, "I should like, on your behalf, as I am certain I can, not only without a dissentient voice, but with enthusiastic acclaim, to express to the Lady Mayoress our best wishes for her happiness in the married state on which she is about to enter. I do not know whether this is without precedent in the history of the Mansion House. No, it is not? Well, if it is not, it is at least a brilliant adornment of the Mayoral year. After half a century, as you say, my Lord Mayor, it is quite right that it should have been repeated."

Miss Gladys Cooper, who was warmly cheered, addressed the gathering on "The Professional Stage of the Future." She confessed that she was not a little frightened at having been asked to speak on such a topic, because one always felt that one never stopped learning how to act. That was one of the great attractions of the stage. At present we were going through a phase of what was called "The Modern School of Acting." A good many

RECEPTION AT THE MANSION HOUSE

years ago the Bancrofts began what was also called a "Modern School." There were a great many people who took pleasure in saying "Ah! I remember Irving in such and such a part," or it was Wyndham, or Tree, or their "Darling Ellen Terry," happily still with them. She had a feeling, however, that in forty or fifty years' time there would still be people saying, "Ah! but I remember Du Maurier," or "I saw Ainley in that," or "How wonderful Sybil Thorndike was." She hardly dared hope there might be someone who remembered Gladys Cooper.

They noticed the same tendency in the case of revivals, went on Miss Cooper. She remembered after the revival of "Diplomacy" in 1913 she felt very sorry for herself on reading the comparisons made between herself and Mrs. Kendal and Miss Kate Rorke. Very perplexed, she said to Lady Wyndham, "According to the newspapers I should have to give an entirely different reading at every performance." Lady Wyndham replied, "If you play in a revival you lay yourself open to comparisons. After I created the part of Ada Ingott in the production by Charles Wyndham of 'David Garrick,' I never had a good word. But afterwards, whenever any other actress played the part the newspapers always said, 'Ah! But we remember how Mary Moore played it.'" That was very English. It was said that the cinema would kill the theatre. That could never happen. The cinema was mechanical, and would in time be perfected. The stage would never be perfected. It was too personal, and in that lay its overwhelming charm. (Cheers.)

Mr. Granville-Barker spoke of his delight, as a "Cockney" born within sound of Bow Bells (if the wind were good and in the right direction) and one with recollections of the Lord Mayor's Show at the age of five, at seeing the British Drama League received at the Mansion House. The City was a symbol of a great deal in England, particularly of the financial brain that directed England. He had never been one of those who thought art should be divorced from economics, especially in the theatre. The art of the theatre could not exist if its economics were unsound. That

occasion might be used for readjusting the mind of the theatre on the subject of its economics. Its finance was probably a good deal sounder than it used to be, but it still remained true that it had not done all that it should for the art of the theatre. A good deal of the finance of the theatre was radically unsound. The average man who dealt in money regarded theatrical enterprise as the occasion for a little flutter. No good came to its art from that outlook. As a result there had been a movement in England for national and municipal endowment, and attention had been called to what had been done in France and Germany and Austria. He ventured to think that a mistake, and that it would have been very much better to have gone, in spirit at any rate, to the City and to have put the problem to men accustomed to think of financial problems from an English point of view. If he were concerned in the advocacy of a great national theatre, that was what he would do; try to approach the problem of finance from an entirely new point of view under the advice of men who made what was known as "the City."

In lighter vein Mr. Granville-Barker went on to refer to that reception as the fulfilment of a 300-year-old debt from the Lord Mayors of the City. He learned from Chambers's immortal work, "The Elizabethan Stage," some really disgraceful things of previous Lord Mayors. One spent much time in trying to uproot the theatres from the City of London. Another Lord Mayor rather gave himself away when he wrote, again with the same object in view of turning the theatre out of the City, "To play in plague time is to increase the plague by infection; to play out of plague time is to draw the plague by offending of God upon occasion of such plays." However, said Mr. Granville-Barker in conclusion, the Lord Mayor had now made handsome amends for the ill-will of his predecessors. (Cheers and laughter.)

On the call of Viscount Burnham, three hearty cheers were given by the company for the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress, and the Lord Mayor returned warm acknowledgment of his guests' expression of thanks.

DRAMA LEAGUE CONFERENCE

Minutes of the Meeting at Caxton Hall,

Saturday, October 30, 1926.

M R. HARLEY GRANVILLE-BARKER in the chair.

Societies represented, 83.

Individual Members present, 65.

Morning Session.

The Minutes of the last meeting which had been circularized were taken as read and signed.

The Chairman, in opening the Conference, stated that the meeting was being held under the pleasantest of circumstances—the membership of the League had risen since the issue of the last Report in July from 1,620 to 1,807. After the recent report of the Board of Education on the Drama in Adult Education, it could never again be said that the dramatic movement in England was not of national and vital importance. A turning point in the history of the League was reached when the Carnegie Trustees enabled them to establish and increase the Library Service.

It was a great mistake to suppose that the League was nothing but a collection of amateur societies. The League was something very much more than that: it was interested in the drama as a whole. The highest manifestation of art would always be by those who devoted their whole lives to it; but the theatre lacked nothing so much as an educated audience, and he did not see how this could exist in England unless it was cultivated, not only by the professional theatre, but by the amateur lovers of the art. If there had not existed the amateur in music, audiences for classical and really good music would be practically non-existent. He suggested that a real demand for the best in the drama could only be obtained by the constant cultivation of the love of the drama amongst such amateur societies as those present represented.

1. *Address by Mr. Godfrey Tearle on the relations between the Professional and Amateur Stage.*

Mr. Godfrey Tearle representing the Stage Guild, and supported by Mr. Reginald Bach and Mr. Woodward, spoke on the relations between the Professional and Amateur Stage. There was, he said, no antagonism between the two. The Stage Guild in fact, if he might say so, approved of amateur societies—many of their members having come from the amateur to the professional stage. Indeed, they regarded the amateur stage as the best possible school for the professional stage. They did feel, however, that some amateur performances in the provinces were harmful to Professional Touring Companies. A week's performance by amateurs at a Provincial Theatre not only robbed the professional company of a week's work, but tended to reduce the takings at the theatre both during the week before and the week following the amateur production. The Stage Guild had actually dared to suggest that such amateur organizations should pay a percentage on their takings to the professional company thus injured. Mr. Godfrey Tearle further stated that he looked forward confidently to the time when the Stage Guild would work in harmony and affiliation with the British Drama League which

all respected; and he urged all present to endeavour to see the point of view of those who are wishing to make more stable and secure the position of the professional touring companies. He asked all carefully to consider this question and to work together with the Stage Guild for the government of the Theatre for the Theatre and by the Theatre, to the exclusion of individual interests which penalise the community at large.

The Chairman stated that he would like to thank Mr. Tearle and the other members of the Stage Guild for having attended the Conference. He hoped that by the next Conference the matter would be thoroughly discussed and reduced to practical terms, and that the subject might be placed on the agenda next year, and that the Stage Guild might feel itself able actually to take part in the debate as members of the Conference. The Chairman assured Mr. Tearle that everyone must have been practically touched by what he had said, and that he trusted that there would be friendly and profitable discussion between the interests concerned.

2. The following Resolution was moved by Mr. Philip Ahier and seconded by Mr. Addey of the Barnsley Playgoers Society:—

“That this Conference recommends the Council of the British Drama League to publish an Annual Report containing amongst other items of information, a list of affiliated societies and the names and addresses of the secretaries.”

Mr. Ahier stated that in the course of his secretarial duties he had occasion to write to the secretaries of other societies, and was much handicapped by not having their addresses.

The matter was then discussed. The Hon. Treasurer of the League, Mr. Alec Rea stated that he would oppose the resolution on account of its cost; Mr. Cyril Wood stated that he did not think such a Yearbook was necessary, since all such information required could be obtained from the offices of the League. On being put to the vote, 22 votes were recorded for and 26 against the motion, which was therefore not carried.

3. The following Resolution was moved by the Huddersfield College Dramatic Society, seconded by Mr. Hayward of the Birmingham Amateur Dramatic Federation and Community Players.

“That this Conference deplores the paucity of literary plays suitable for production by boys and girls in Secondary Schools and kindred institutions, and draws the attention of our leading dramatists to this neglect of an important factor in Educational work.”

Mr. Ahier, in speaking to the resolution, stated that, as a master in a school, he found great difficulty in finding suitable plays for the boys to read and perform—apart from Shakespeare and Sheridan there was very little choice among three-act plays.

In seconding the resolution, Mr. Hayward stated that he was chairman of the Juvenile Section of

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the Birmingham Federation, and it would not take long for him to exhaust the plays which were suitable for performance.

Miss Kitty Willoughby suggested that the League should organize a competition for new plays. Mrs. Storr Best stated that the one objection she would have would be that all plays written for a special purpose were bad plays.

Mr. Plumstead stated that the Library of the League could furnish a considerable number of plays suitable for boys.

Dr. L. du Garde Peach in supporting the motion said the great trouble was that authors who wrote plays for children would insist on writing down to what they imagined was wanted. Children of today were far beyond the "Babes in the Wood" stage. If the Drama League could do something to show that there was money in it, Dr. Peach did not think there was any doubt that authors would supply plays. He suggested that the League should organize a competition.

Mr. Cyril Wood opposed the resolution as being outside the scope of the League. Mr. T. R. Dawes of Castleford, Yorks, supported the resolution. Mrs. Usher, of the Liverpool Playhouse Circle, stated that there was a great need for suitable modern plays, especially after four or five years of Shakespeare.

Mrs. Rogers of the Folkhouse, Bristol, supported the resolution. Mr. Green, of the New Earswick Dramatic Society, stated that he did not approve of the wording of the resolution in so far as it seemed to dictate to dramatists. He hoped that arising out of this conference, the League might form a sub-committee to go into the matter, and that a list of plays for boys and girls should be printed in DRAMA.

Mr. Smith, of the Altringham Garrick, was in agreement with the last speaker. Miss Pakington stated that such a list was already in preparation by the Village Drama Society.

Mr. C. B. Purdom, of Welwyn Garden City, suggested the following amendment:-

"That this Conference deplores the paucity of plays suitable for production by boys and girls in Secondary Schools and kindred institutions, and asks the Council of the British Drama League

- (a) To prepare a recommended list of such plays that already exist.
- (b) To organize a competition of new plays suitable for such a purpose, and
- (c) to consider what further steps should be taken to remedy this state of things.

Mrs. Cyril Wood, of the Interlude Theatre Guild, stated that she would support the resolution. The Drama League existed for the purpose of serving the highest interests of Art, and its great aim must be to foster in the children a love for the very highest in every branch of Art.

Mr. Nello suggested that Miss Buckton had written some plays on the Arthurian legends which were eminently suitable for boys to act. The chairman stated that he accepted very gratefully Mr. Plumstead's tribute to the Library service. He drew the attention of the members to the League's booklet "Plays to act, and how to act them."

The motion as amended was then put to the vote, and carried.

4. Resolution moved by Mr. H. P. Plumstead, seconded by Mr. Wilby, of the Leicester Drama Society.

- "That a Committee be set up to formulate plans
- (1) For a Bureau to assist amateur critics by criticizing their work;
- (2) For the organization of "Criticism" or "discussion" parties which should visit both amateur and commercial performances, informal discussion following.

In speaking to the resolution, Mr. Plumstead stated that amateur critics were unable to obtain help in their work in the same way as amateur playwrights, and there was a great need for a bureau to afford such help, not only to guide the critic towards right judgment, but also to safeguard the chances of the amateur playwright and the amateur player by seeing that justice was done.

Mr. Harold Rubinstein stated that the words "amateur critic" were somewhat incomprehensible as he considered that anyone who went to a theatre was a critic.

Mr. Crowther (Huddersfield Thespians) stated that he thought the resolution somewhat unnecessary. Any society wanting a critic should compete in the National Festival when they would have valuable criticism from the judges.

Mr. Harold Downs (Bath Playgoers), urged the importance of the criticism published in DRAMA being sent by someone unconnected with the society.

Mrs. Storr Best (Sheffield Playgoers), stated that she very heartily sympathized with the last speaker, and she suggested that the Drama League, with the societies in a particular area, should appoint a critic to attend the performances of those societies, and send his criticism for publication in DRAMA. Mrs. Storr Best pointed out that, in several instances, she had read negations of the truth in "News from North and South," in DRAMA, owing no doubt, to the report having been sent in by someone prejudiced in favour of the society giving the performance.

Mr. Geoffrey Whitworth stated that he was fully alive to this difficulty, and he realized the necessity for a critic outside the society. He enquired if Mrs. Storr Best would start the organization of such criticism in Sheffield, and see how it worked.

Mr. Harold Matthews (Leamington A.D.S.), proposed the resolution as being outside the function of the League.

The Chairman stated that there might be some difficulty for the Council to take steps in this matter, but if the societies themselves would institute a self-denying censorship so that each report sent in to DRAMA should have no suspicion of bias, that was another matter.

Mr. Plumstead stated that his sole object in raising the matter was to promote discussion on the subject, and the Chairman agreed that the discussion had been very fruitful. Mr. Plumstead finally agreed to withdraw his motion and to bring it up in the afternoon session in a more practical form.

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Afternoon Session.

7. Resolution moved by Miss Josephine Knowles, seconded by Miss Kitty Willoughby.

"That the British Drama League give a yearly reception (not dinner), so that all those who work in co-operation, namely, author, actor, producer, composer, scene designer may get to know one another to their mutual benefit."

This resolution on being put to the vote was carried; the votes being 11 for the resolution and 6 against.

8. Resolution moved by Huddersfield Thespians, seconded by Altrincham Garrick Society:—

"That this meeting is of the opinion that the time has arrived for the abolition of the flat-rate fee for Amateur Play-Producing Societies which do not contribute to Charity, and that the Drama League should make a renewed effort to establish payment on the basis of a percentage on gross receipts, in accordance with the scheme already adopted by the League."

Mr. Crowther, in moving the resolution, stated that he would like to start by saying that he had the support, not only of his own society, but of such organizations as the Civic Playhouse, Leeds, the Leeds Art Theatre, the Manchester Unnamed Society, etc., etc.

Mr. Crowther, in advocating the abolition of the flat-rate fee, pointed out that authors would, in the long run, actually gain by the royalty system of payment, and he quoted figures in support of this belief, and cited instances of plays being taken on tour on the percentage basis of payment to the financial advantage of the authors. The flat-rate system lacked equity.

Mr. Crowther stated that Mr. Granville-Barker had allowed the Thespians to perform his plays for a 10 per cent. royalty. The gross takings on three performances of "Prunella" has been £125, of which, the author, under the arrangement, received £12 10s. If the flat-rate fee had been paid, Mr. Granville-Barker would have received £15 15s. However, the month after, the Thespians gave performances at the Theatre Royal of "The Voyage Inheritance" and took £250-£300. Mr. Granville-Barker's royalty amounted to £25-£30; a gain of £15 over the flat rate. Thus the author was actually in pocket by £7 on the two plays. Mr. Crowther further pointed out that all amateur performances of Gilbert and Sullivan's operas were paid by a percentage—and it was quite obviously the only method which could be approved by business men. There was also the difficulty of defining the distinction between "Amateur and Professional."

Mr. Smith, in seconding the resolution, on behalf of the Altrincham Garrick, stated that it should be remembered that modern amateur societies were entirely different from the old-fashioned well-to-do society who played in aid of Charities, and merely for amusement. The Altrincham Garrick, and many other similar institutions, were out to establish a Communal Theatre. The flat-rate fees were a great handicap to the establishment of a Repertory Theatre.

Mr. St. John Ervine said that there was opposition in the Society of Authors to the proposal. It

would involve an enormous reduction in income to authors. A London dramatic club performed one of his plays for which on the flat rate he would have received ten guineas. As a matter of fact, on the percentage basis he received 18s. One extraordinary fact about this continual application for the reduction of authors' fees was that it always came from a district which could be defined by a straight line drawn between Manchester and Leeds. The meanest people on God's earth lived on that straight line.

When authors were threatened by Dramatic Societies that they would not produce their plays—that was often just what they wanted, unless the Societies were prepared to compensate the authors for the great injury which some of the Dramatic Societies did them. The people who made these complaints were really a very small minority of the amateur societies.

He believed the British Drama League had proposed that the minimum fee should be 30s., but a single performance of a play was of no interest to an author in a financial sense. His suggestion was that amateur societies should amalgamate for the purpose of arranging a panel of plays to be performed throughout a season at a reduced fee, provided that the authors were guaranteed a certain number of performances. It was no good going to authors and threatening them.

If they asked authors to reduce their fees, they must give them something in return, and he would suggest that that return should be something like a consecutive number of performances, say, fifty or a hundred. They could pass resolutions such as that now before them until they were blue in the face, but the situation would remain exactly as it was.

Dr. du Garde Peach, in supporting the resolution, stated that as an amateur actor and also an author, he had a foot in both camps. The question of the small society which wanted to produce modern plays concerned everyone. As a Manchester man he would like to point out that people came to London from the north, and paid high prices to see plays. It was all very well to criticize the north and say the people were mean, but it was because they wanted to get value for their money that they looked on both sides of sixpence. The line which had been mentioned was really the front line of the great war of commerce. The front line in any war was not usually a very pleasant place, and he remembered that when he was in France he heard staff officers saying, prior to visiting the trenches, that they were going slumming. The attitude of those officers had its exact counterpart in the attitude of the Southerners visiting Manchester. A man without brains could not exist very long in Manchester. Down in the South such a man might ooze along for years.

They did not want to rob authors, but they did want to perform their plays and see what sort of a message they had for the public.

Dr. Peach suggested that some line might be drawn between single performances and runs of more than three nights. He considered that the minimum fee of £1 10s. for a full length play was, on the whole, a very fair suggestion. The

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Drama League might possibly guarantee the honesty of its societies and act as a clearing house.

Mr. F. E. Doran (Manchester Playgoers), in supporting the resolution, stated that he, as "one of the meanest people on earth," had listened with great attention to Mr. St. John Ervine, and he noticed that while the Amateur was offering Mr. Ervine £1 10s., he merely extended to the Amateur his sympathy. Mr. Doran declared that Mr. Ervine seemed prepared to compromise on blackmailing terms, and his proposal was preposterous. He noted that Mr. Ervine did not suggest that the royalty scheme was a backward step. If it could be proved that it was against the best interests of the Drama in this country, the League would drop this scheme. It was a step in the right direction, and he, therefore, had great pleasure in supporting the resolution.

Mrs. Corner (Surrey Federation of Women's Institutes), stated that she was opposed to the resolution, as in the country she had only just been able to persuade the villagers that it was right to pay the author a fee for the performance of his play and she feared the time had not yet come for them to undertake to pay on a different method. She would advocate a more favourable system on the flat-rate scheme. Mrs. Storr Best (Sheffield Playgoers,) stated that her society was anxious to pay as much as possible to authors, but the present system was handicapping their work. She supported the resolution.

Mr. Green (New Eastwick Dramatic Society), was in favour of the resolution.

Mr. Martin Browne considered the present policy of the authors short-sighted.

Mr. Downs (Bath Playgoers), supported Mr. St. John Ervine. He suggested that societies should make as much money as possible by producing plays on a royalty basis, and thus enable them to produce plays by those authors who insisted on the flat rate.

Mrs. Rogers (Folkhouse Bristol), supported the resolution.

Mr. Talbot proposed the following amendment which was seconded by Mr. Harold Rubinstein :—

"That this Conference is of the opinion that the needs of small societies (not performing for charity) would best be met by a graduated scale of fees. The Conference recommends the Drama League to appoint a Committee to fix the principle of grading societies according to their resources, upon which the League would issue its annual certificate: the Committee to acquaint the authors and agents of the scheme, and the League to advise its members of those authors and agents who would be willing to make bookings at the modified fees on presentation of the League's certificates."

Mr. Plumstead and Mr. Cyril Wood both stated that they would support the amendment.

Mr. Purdon opposed the amendment.

Mrs. Corner stated she did not think it fair to ask any organization to discriminate in the way suggested, and she also objected to the suggestion that an author should undervalue his own work—she therefore opposed the amendment.

The Chairman stated that the Council had no power to compel anyone to abide by its decisions,

and the most it could do was to make recommendations. He then read the following letter which had been received by Mr. Whitworth from the Secretary of the Incorporated Society of Authors, Playwrights and Composers :—

"Dear Sir,—At a meeting of the Dramatic Committee of the Society of Authors, Playwrights, and Composers, held at this office to-day, I was instructed to forward you the following resolution in answer to your communication of October 12.
"While we appreciate the excellent work of the Play-producing Societies referred to in your letter, and are fully conscious of the new conditions arising from their growing activity, we feel, in view of the fact that many of our members are already committed to various accredited agents on certain terms, and also of the difficulty of checking amateur accounts, that the time has not yet come to make a general recommendation to our members to depart from the principle of the flat rate.

In many cases the acceptance of the percentage system would involve a considerable reduction of authors' fees, and granting that the work of these societies cannot always be carried on except by the reduction of working expenses, it seems only equitable to suggest that the burden of this reduction should not be borne by the author alone.

Yours very truly, G. HERBERT THRING."

The Chairman also stated that the League had recently circularized a questionnaire among 500 of its societies; 118 had replied, of these 91 were in favour of the percentage system, 8 in favour of the flat rate and 19 had no definite views. It was obvious that if any real influence was to be brought to bear upon authors, more propaganda must be undertaken and more interest must be shown.

The Chairman further suggested that the Council should set up an *ad hoc* Committee to see if some arrangement could be arrived at which would reconcile the opinions of the majority of those present at the Conference with the views of Mr. St. John Ervine and the Society of Authors.

Mr. Crowther stated that with this assurance from the Chairman, he would withdraw his resolution.

Other Business.

Mr. A Forbes Sieveking stated that he had a number of valuable programmes which he would like to present to the League's Library if they would be accepted. The Chairman, on behalf of the Library, stated that such a gift would be very gratefully received.

Miss Van Thal stated that, in the absence of Miss Elsie Fogerty, she wished to urge that no author or actor should write, or take part in, a play in which stammerers were represented as comic characters. Such a practice was cruel and inartistic.

Mrs. Storr Best (Sheffield Playgoers), asked if she might express the thanks of her society for the Library service during the year.

Mr. Green (New Eastwick Dramatic Society), proposed, Mr. Dawes seconded, a sincere vote of thanks to Mr. H. Granville-Barker for taking the Chair. This was passed unanimously.

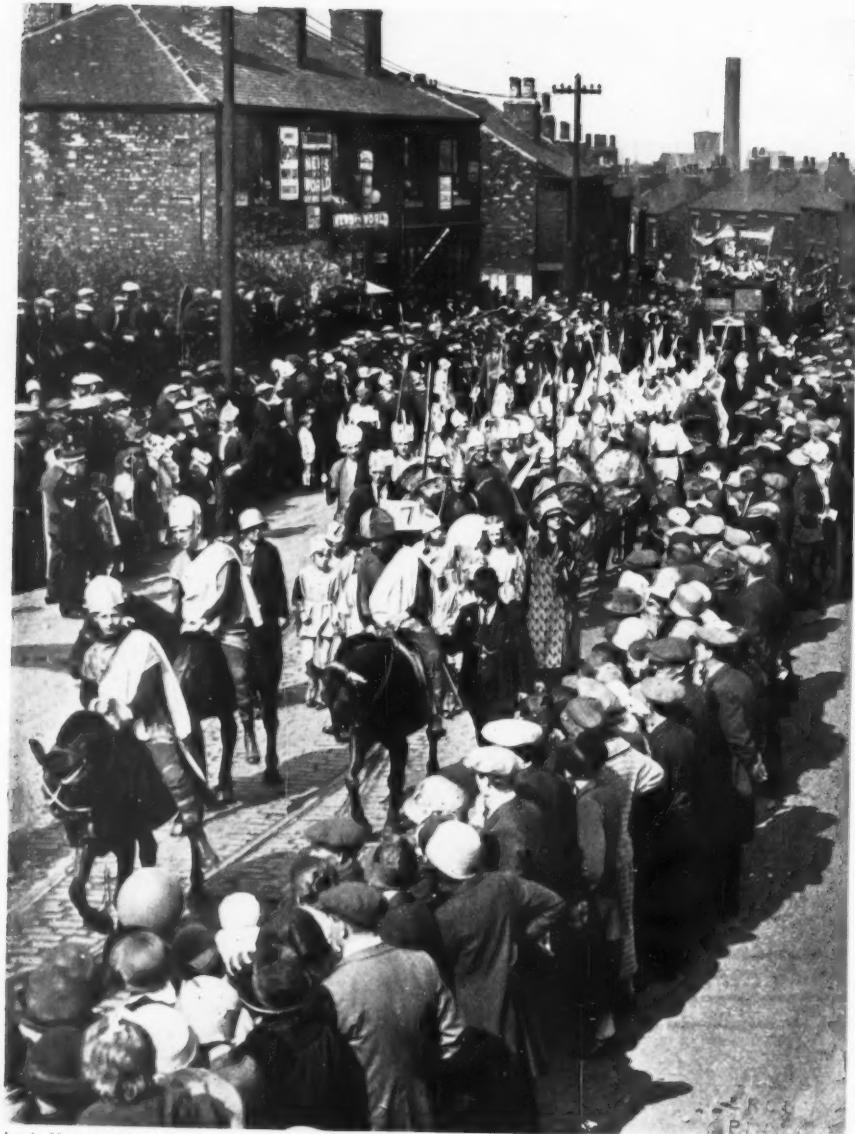


CHARLES THE WRESTLER.



ROSAMIND.

TWO DESIGNS FOR "AS YOU LIKE IT," BY
REGINALD H. LEEFE, OF THE ARGOSY.



Leeds Mercury, Photo

DRAMA AND THE COAL STRIKE IN YORKSHIRE. PITBOYS ON THEIR PONIES AS SAXONS. MINERS AS DANES. REPRODUCED FROM "THE PAGEANTS OF THE CASTLEFORD MINERS." BY T. R. DAWES.

NEWS FROM NORTH AND SOUTH

SOME ANNUAL REPORTS.

We have received copies of the Annual Reports of a number of Theatre Societies throughout the country, and from them we select the following for notice as being likely to be of special interest to our readers.

SHEFFIELD PLAYGOERS.

At May last, there was a paid up membership of 727, an increase of 87 on last year's figures. There have been no fewer than 30 meetings during the year, including 12 Playreadings, and 8 productions. Among these we note "The Harlequinade," by Dion Calthrop and H. Granville-Barker, "The Unobtainable," by Somerset Maugham (produced by the Hon. Secretary, Miss Radford), and "The Round Table," by Lennox Robinson, produced and rehearsed by the author. Altogether the record of a good year's work and enjoyment. The announcement of a Special Play Competition, organized by this society, appears in our advertisement pages.

MARPLE DRAMATIC AND LITERARY SOCIETY.

This society was founded in 1906, and it has a long record of pioneer work behind it. So early as 1907 it was producing plays like Ibsen's "Pillars of Society," and Shaw's "The Devil's Disciple." For the last season, the programme included "The Shadow of the Glen," "Ayuli" (one of the British Drama League series plays), Androcles and the Lion," "Midsummer Fire," and "Pygmalion." Future fixtures include "The Skin Game," on December 15-18, and "The Merry Wives of Windsor," on March 9-12.

OXTED AND LIMPSFIELD PLAYERS.

One of the most go-ahead village societies is that of the above title. The membership is 174 (41 joined last year). Playreadings are organized by a special sub-committee, and productions of "The Liars," "Prunella," and "The House Fairy," by Laurence Housman, together with scenes from "The Taming of the Shrew," "L'Histoire d'un Pierrot," and "Iphigenia," have been given in the beautiful Barn Theatre.

LEICESTER DRAMA SOCIETY.

On October 28, Mr. Ashley Dukes lectured on "The Theatre—Art or Argument," and on November 25, Mr. Nugent Monck will speak. On November 16-18, the Society will present "Autumn Fire," by T. C. Murray. The objects of the society are described as follows:—

To promote Drama in such ways as the following:—

(1) Having a central organization of persons interested in the promotion of good Drama in the City who may be referred to for advice and active help.

(2) Holding Fortnightly Meetings at which (a) Amateurs read plays and receive advice and help in dramatics, (b) Discussions are held, (c) Recitals or Lectures are given.

(3) Having a central organization for producing plays of the better sort.

(4) Encouraging playwrights by opportunity for production.

(5) Forming a Dramatic library.

MAIDSTONE DRAMATIC SOCIETY.

Founded in October, 1925, the Society had 115 members by the end of March, 1926. No fewer than 18 full length plays have been read; the audiences averaging between 40 and 50. It is believed that the casting of a full length play weekly, is exceptional, if not unique, and the society may congratulate itself on this achievement in its first season. Three productions were also carried out: "At Mrs. Beam's" at the Corn Exchange, and "Dear Brutus," and "The Thief," at the Palace Theatre. Twenty-nine parts were cast, and 23 members took part. All productions appeared to be well received, and "Dear Brutus" was also a financial success. A tribute should here be paid to members of the society, Mr. J. Wesley Clark, Mr. Lyle and Mr. Simmons, who did able work in production and stage management.

At the request of the Rural Community Council (Drama Section), two members of the society were sent to two meetings of the Council, held at the Sessions House during the year; the object being to co-ordinate the dramatic societies of Kent, arrange interchange of books, scenery, etc., and also of productions. A permanent Committee has been set up to which Mrs. Howat and the Secretary of this society have been elected; and a complete list of all forthcoming amateur dramatic productions in Kent, and of all scenery, etc., available is now prepared and circulated every few months.

ABERDEENSHIRE. VISIT OF THE ARTS LEAGUE OF SERVICE.

The King Hall, Grange, standing on a fair hill-side and commanding fine views of Strath Isla, was a setting rich and rare for the Arts League Players on their journeys through the wilds of Aberdeenshire. The hall, built to serve the three parishes of Cairnie, Grange, and Rothiemay, was filled to overflowing. Whether or no its dimensions suffice on other occasions—on this, the performance of the Arts League—it might very easily have doubled its capacity. The audience, cheerful and enthusiastic, was clearly out for adventure!

The League's Northern Company—of which the moving spirits are Eleanor Elder and Hugh Mackay—is well up to standard. Miss Elder is amazingly versatile. Her industry and endurance—and a prominent member of the Travelling Theatre Company must needs have both!—are beyond all praise. On her the most exacting demands are made. Whether it was the nearness of his native heather and hills, or just a happy mood, Mr. Mackay's singing of the plaintive Hebridean airs was never more mellow nor more sweet!

In the folk-songs and sea-chanties, rhythm and attack were good, and Donald Wolfit and his companions capered gleefully. Margaret Howard was

NEWS FROM NORTH AND SOUTH

adequate at the piano. The placing of "Cloud-break," by A. O. Roberts as the very first number we thought regrettable. A strange fancy—it requires an atmosphere of sympathy and understanding from the audience which, somehow, was lacking.

But on the whole, the evening was a delight, and one came away with the conviction that those who have only met with the Arts League Players in the towns, can but vaguely realize their motive, and are limited in appreciation of their value.

LOUISE HARBOURNE.

THE ASHBURTON PLAYERS.

Undoubtedly amateurs are wise to eschew West-end successes, and produce plays of merit that are seldom seen on the professional stage. On October 5 the Ashburton Players gave "The Critic." Many members of the audience must have been grateful for their first chance to see the famous comedy, and all must have been pleased by the spirit, humour and intelligence with which it was tackled. Warm praise is due to Miss Herring for her handling of her team. If no one was quite at home in his part, no one was shirking or secretly blaming the author when lines proved ineffective; little was lost from lapse of memory, and remarkably little from faulty diction. Only one passage failed to make the right impression—Tilburina's madness, which is almost insuperably difficult, owing to the change in popular feeling towards insanity as a subject of mirth. M. M.

The "Members' Evenings" which have played such an important part in the development of the above society continue to be held. "An Evening with Dickens," has been arranged for November 29, when new members will be responsible for a Miscellaneous Programme of musical and dramatic items. The Players will close their season for this year by two performances of "Chains," by Miss Elizabeth Baker, on December 11 and 14.

There are vacancies for one or two young men. Please write to the Secretary—Miss Alice Herring, 313 Addison House, Grove End Road, N.W.8.

BIRMINGHAM.

Birmingham University Dramatic Society, whose production of "Salma" last March aroused such widespread interest, has chosen for its Annual Play Jacinto Benavente's "Princess Bebe," one of this distinguished Spanish Dramatist's most delightful plays.

"Princess Bebe," which will be produced next March, is a romantic comedy, full of life and colour, and, like "Salma," essentially youthful in its appeal and sympathy. Interest in the production will be increased by the fact that this will be the first production of "Princess Bebe" in this country, although it has frequently been performed abroad. The settings will be designed by Mr. Alec Shanks, whose designs for "Salma" were so successful.

A PAGEANT OF BISHOPSGATE.

In July nine performances of a Pageant of Bishopsgate were given by the Central Foundation Girls' School, Spital Square (opening into Bishopsgate). The pageant was part of the bicentenary

celebrations of the school, which, founded in 1726, was known as the St. Botolph, Bishopsgate, Charity School and the Bishopsgate Ward School. It is the only charity and ward school which has developed into a secondary school whilst remaining in its original parish and ward.

The pageant, starting with Roman times and ending with the present day, comprised seven scenes, every girl of the school taking part.

It was more than a pageant in the ordinary sense of the word, a succession of living pictures; it was a combination of pageant and play. The setting was the playground walls, there were no hangings, and the properties were the simplest possible, chiefly chairs, benches, and such things as could easily be carried on by the heralds in the few minutes between the scenes. All the dresses were historically accurate; they were designed by the Art Mistress, and made by the girls themselves. There was much lending and borrowing, altering and adapting, with the result that the expenses were kept at a minimum.

Wherever possible, the continuity of certain ideas was maintained. Thus an alderman appeared in the street scene of 1420, in the nunnery scene of 1470, in the Pindar scene of 1620, and in the Bishopsgate Ward School scene of the eighteenth century. Crosby Hall was referred to directly and indirectly in Scenes IV, and V, and Sir Thomas Gresham on two separate occasions. Interspersed throughout were dances of different types and different periods.

The pageant ended with the assembly of the school, when, scene after scene, the actors returned to the playground stage. Four hundred voices proclaiming "Let us now praise famous men and our fathers that begat us," preceded the Commemoration of the School Benefactors in the School Bidding Prayer. The school hymn, "O God, our Help in Ages Past," was followed by the National Anthem. Then singing the "Children's Hymn," the long procession of girls passed from the stage into the school, and the Pageant of Bishopsgate ended.

STOCKTON SHAKESPEARE RECITALS.

A large and appreciative audience spent an enjoyable evening at the Stockton Secondary Schools, recently, when the first of a series of recitals under the national programme on behalf of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre Fund, was held. The arrangements were admirably carried through by Miss Ivy Smithson, local representative of the Poetry Society (Incorp.) under whose auspices the recital was held, and the extremely gratifying number of 36 entries was received. The competitors who gained the honours are eligible to compete for the silver medals at the regional recital to be held at Newcastle towards the end of the year, prior to the final, which is to be held in London on Shakespeare Day, 1927.

SCENERY FOR SALE.

The Hull Playgoers Society have scenery for sale suitable for a performance of "The Adding Machine." Application should be made to Miss Jennie Young, Berkeley House, Princes Avenue, Hull.

A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BOOKS

For readers interested in the theory, practice and history of

COMMUNITY DRAMA

The following bibliography was compiled by the League at the request of the National Book Council. We publish it here for the benefit of our readers and hope from time to time to issue similar lists on other subjects. All the books mentioned are in the Library or may be purchased through the Drama League Bookshop, 8 Adelphi Terrace, London, W.C.2. All prices are net.

BOOKS ON THE CHOICE OF PLAYS.

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- Acting and Play Production; a manual for classes, clubs and little theatres.*
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How to Produce Amateur Plays. BARRETT H. CLARK. (Harrap). 1925. 5s.
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A Book for Shakespeare's Plays and Pageants; a treasury of Elizabethan and Shakespearean detail for producers, stage-managers, actors, artists and students. ORIE L. HATCHER. (Dent). 1916. 10s. 6d.
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Producing in Little Theatres. CLARENCE STRATTON. (Allen & Unwin). 1922. 8s. 6d.
Modern Stage Production. FRANK VERNON. (The Stage). 1923. 3s. 6d.

DECORATION, SCENERY, LIGHTING.

- The Secrets of Stage Painting and Stage Effects.* VAN DYKE BROWNE. (Routledge). 1913. 5s.
On the Art of the Theatre. EDWARD GORDON CRAIG. (Heinemann). 1911. 10s. 6d.
Continental Stagecraft. KENNETH MACGOWAN. (Benn). 1923. 25s.
Stage Lighting for Little Theatres. C. HAROLD RIDGE. (Heffer, Cambridge). 1925. 5s.
Scenes for Scene Painters. A. ROSE. (Routledge). 1925. 3s. 6d.
The Bankside Stage Book. H. W. WHANSLAW. (Wells Gardner, Darton.) 1924. 5s. Contains directions for the construction of a model Elizabethan stage which can be used for experimental purposes.

COSTUME.

- English Costume (1066-1830).* DION CLAYTON CALTHROP. (Black). 1907. 12s. 6d.
* *Le Costume chez les Peuples Anciens et Modernes.* F. HOTTENROTH. (Guérinet).
- Ancient Egyptian, Assyrian and Persian Costumes and Decorations.* MARY G. HOUSTON AND F. S. HORNBLOWER. (Black). 1920. 10s. 6d.
- Dress Design; an account of English costume for artists and dressmakers (earliest times—late 19th century).* TALBOT HUGHES. (Pitman). 1926. 12s. 6d.
- Historic Costume. 1490-1790.* F. M. KELLY AND R. SCHWABE. (Batsford). 1925. 25s.
- On English Costume.* MARY KELLY. (Village Drama Society). 1925. 1s.
- Costume and Fashion: the evolution of European dress throughout the earlier ages (up to 1066).* HERBERT NORRIS. (Dent). 1925. 25s.
- * *A Cyclopaedia of Costume and Dictionary of Dress (2 vols.).* J. R. PLANCHÉ. (Chatto and Windus). 1876-79.
- The Costumes of Eastern Europe.* MAX TILKE. (Benn). 1926. £5 5s.
- The Bankside Costume Book (Elizabethan period).* MELICENT STONE. (Wells Gardner, Darton). 1913. 3s.

MAKE-UP.

- The Art of Make-up.* HELENA CHALMERS. (Appleton). 1925. 6s.
- How to Make-up.* S. J. ADAIR FITZGERALD. (French). 1920. 2s. 6d.
- * *The Art of Theatrical Make-up.* CAVENDISH MORTON. (Black). 1909.

SPEECH AND GESTURE.

- The Voice; an introduction to practical phonology.* WILLIAM ARTHUR AIKIN. (Longmans, Green). 1910. 10s. 6d.
- The Art of Mimicry.* J. ARTHUR BLEACKLEY. (French). 1911. 2s. 6d.
- The Speaking of English Verse.* ELSIE FOGERTY. (Dent). 1923. 6s.
- Voice Training in Speech and Song.* HENRY HARPER HULBERT. (University Tutorial Press). 1925. 2s. 3d.
- A Handbook of Elocution.* EDWARD MINSHALL. (Murray). 1922. 2s. 6d.
- The Art of Speaking.* ERNEST PERTWEE. (Routledge). 1904. 2s. 6d.
- Mime.* MARK PERUGINI. (Dancing Times). 1925. 2s. 6d.
- Action, Greenleaf Theatre Elements I. Speech, Greenleaf Theatre Elements II.* CONSTANCE SMEDLEY. (Duckworth). 1925. 6s. each.

The following books will also be of general interest to actors, producers and students concerned with the history and progress of the movement :

- The Exemplary Theatre.* H. GRANVILLE-BARKER. (Chatto and Windus). 1922. 9s.
- Problems of the Actor.* LOUIS CALVERT. (Simpkin). 1919. 7s.
- The New Spirit in the European Theatre, 1914-1924.* HUNTLY CARTER. (Benn). 1925. 25s.
- The Art Theatre.* SHELDON CHENEY. (Knopf, New York). \$3.50.
- The Organised Theatre.* ST. JOHN ERVINE. (Allen and Unwin). 1924. 7s. 6d.
- Our Irish Theatre.* LADY GREGORY. (Putnam's). 1914. 10s.
- The Repertory Theatre.* PERCIVAL P. HOWE. (Secker). 1910. 5s.
- The Theatre of To-Morrow.* KENNETH MACGOWAN. (Fisher Unwin). 1922. 21s.
- The History of the Birmingham Repertory Theatre.* BACHE MATTHEWS. (Chatto and Windus). 1924. 7s. 6d.
- Modern Theatres.* IRVING PICHEL. (Harcourt Brace, New York). 1925. \$2.25.
- An account of modern theatre construction and design.
- My Life in Art.* CONSTANTIN STANISLAVSKY. (Bles). 1925. 30s.

* This book is now out of print but is in the Drama League Library.



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